

Oman launches mobile testing units for coronavirus

Author:

Wed, 2020-05-13 12:18

DUBAI: Oman's Ministry of Health has launched a mobile coronavirus screening service using two buses.

The new mobile units are equipped with the necessary medical tools to examine people, and will be deployed to selected areas based on an epidemiological map.

The health ministry has also partnered with the Oman National Transport Company to facilitate transportation of people to free screening centers.

The buses will cover three areas in Muscat, and will operate from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. local time.



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'The simplest things opened my eyes to Islam': Writer shares experience of being Spanish Muslim woman

Gloves and masks litter Middle East amid virus panic

Author:

AFP

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1589300368638481900

Tue, 2020-05-12 16:15

BEIRUT: While walking in Beirut during the coronavirus lockdown recently, Omar Frangieh was struck by the number of face masks and gloves littering the Lebanese capital.

The photographer, concerned that contaminated waste could itself transmit the disease, took 200 photos of discarded personal protective equipment and posted them in a Facebook album he titled "Invaders in Beirut."

From Baghdad to Gaza, the disposable masks and gloves that remain in high demand to protect populations from the coronavirus pandemic are discarded after use, adding to pollution.

"The major concern though is the fact that this protective equipment is turned into a health hazard by being littered all over Beirut streets," Frangieh told AFP.

While the virus is usually transmitted by close human contact via respiratory droplets, studies show it can survive on some surfaces for days, suggesting that discarded gloves and masks could pose a risk of transmission to whoever cleans them up.

Since the coronavirus emerged in China in December, countries across the Middle East have reported 7,711 deaths and 233,522 COVID-19 cases.

The run on the protective gear has come even as opinion is divided on how useful they are.

The World Health Organization says washing hands regularly is more effective than wearing gloves for preventing the spread of the virus.

The US Center for Disease Control advises ordinary people to wear washable cloth masks in public, allowing in-demand single-use respirators and surgical masks to be used by health care workers and other at-risk groups.

In the Palestinian enclave of Gaza on the eastern Mediterranean, the beachfront – already polluted with rubbish – is now also littered with masks and gloves.

The items are designed to be single use, are not recyclable and most will not biodegrade making them an unsightly source of pollution and potential hazard to marine life if they end up in the ocean.

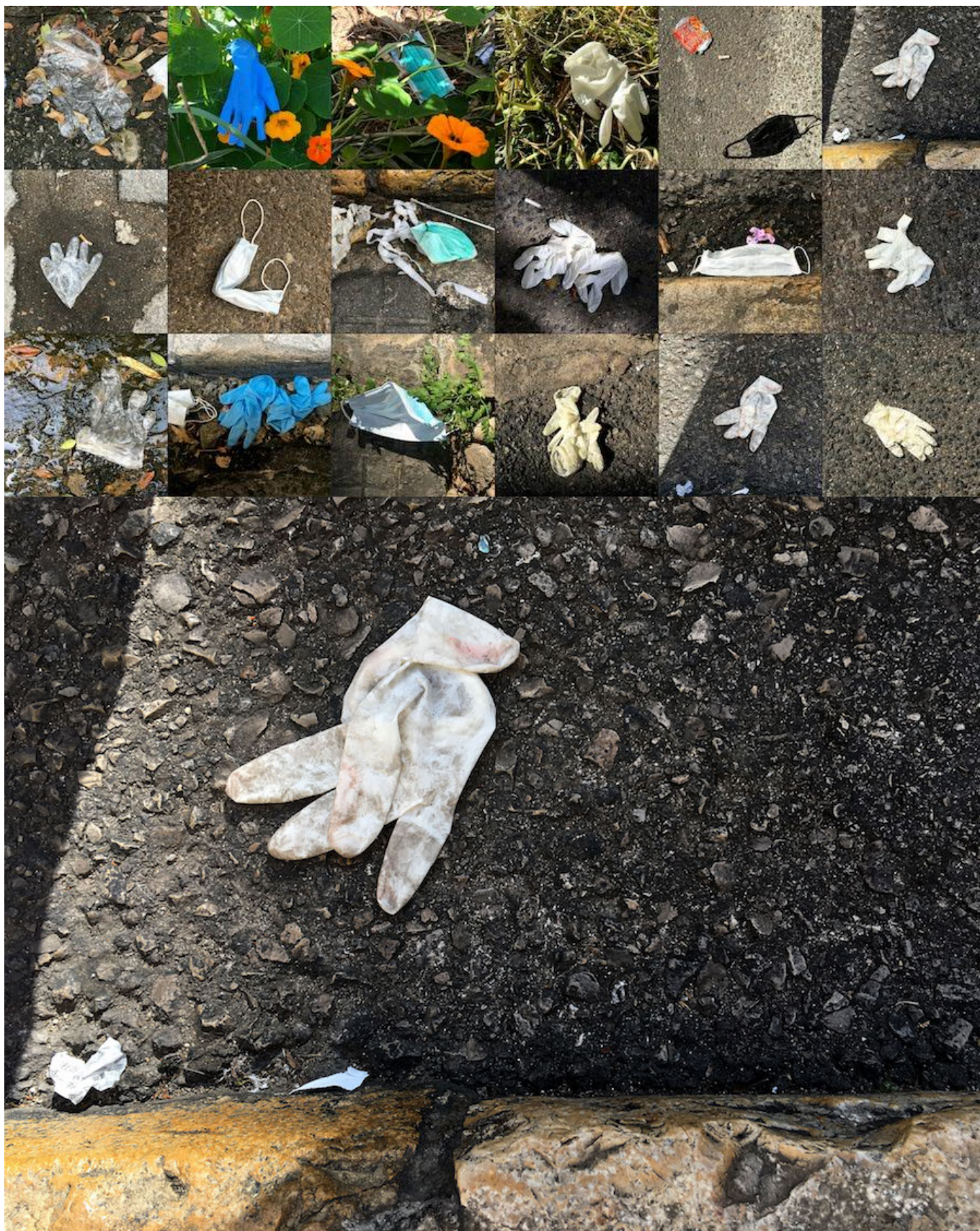
Some small shop owners have taken the initiative to collect them and put them in the trash bin but the beach has long been dotted with rubbish, with poor Gazans often dumping their waste there.

Lina Ouda, who was out for a stroll with her husband, stopped to pick up several discarded items.

"I noticed masks and gloves lying on the cornice and put them in the garbage bin because these things pollute the beach," the 30-year-old told AFP.

Her husband Jamal Ouda explained: "There is no general culture of cleaning the beaches in Gaza but some people take the initiative to collect the

remnants of protective medical gear such as masks and put them in the trash.” But unfortunately, he said, “many people walk wearing masks and gloves and (at the end) throw them on the ground.”













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Sale of counterfeit face masks and surgical gloves on the rise in EgyptGloves off as world champion boxer Amir Khan dreams of 'more fights in Saudi Arabia'

[**Egypt receives \\$2.77 bln in IMF emergency financing**](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1589297990808303200

Tue, 2020-05-12 15:35

CAIRO: Egypt has received \$2.77 billion in emergency financing from the

International Monetary Fund, its state news agency reported on Tuesday, citing a senior central bank source.

The IMF had approved the funds on Monday in an effort to help Egypt to contend with the new coronavirus pandemic that has brought tourism to a standstill and triggered capital flight.



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IMF approves \$2.77bn emergency virus loan for Egypt Doctors' head urges two-week full curfew in Egypt as precaution

[Lebanon, fearing second virus wave, to shut down again for 4 days](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1589293015827936300

Tue, 2020-05-12 14:14

BEIRUT: Lebanon's government has ordered most of the country to shut down again for four days, starting on Wednesday night, as it seeks to ward off a coronavirus resurgence after easing some restrictions. The country has been under lockdown since mid-March to rein in an outbreak that has infected 870 people and killed 26. Lebanon started lifting restrictions last week as part of a longer-term plan, letting restaurants, hair salons, construction sites and others re-open at lower capacity. But the cabinet agreed on Tuesday on the "full closure" for four days to curb a rise in new infections in recent days, after a drop in cases which the government had hailed as a success. "This achievement is at risk of collapsing" because some people did not comply with the guidelines, Prime Minister Hassan Diab was quoted as saying during the meeting. Information Minister Manal Abdel Samad said the four-day closure, which excludes supermarkets and pharmacies, would also allow teams from the health ministry to conduct more testing. She added that the government would re-evaluate its original five-stage plan for gradually reopening the economy. Beirut airport has been closed for nearly two months, except for flights bringing thousands of expatriates home, adding to the rise in infections. The lockdown already includes an overnight curfew, with security forces patrolling some streets. The pandemic has compounded woes in Lebanon, which was already wrestling with a financial crisis that has slashed more than half the value of its currency since late last year.



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[Algeria starts coronavirus test kits production](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1589292654027899700

Mon, 2020-05-11 20:37

ALGIERS: Algeria has started producing rapid test kits for the novel coronavirus, with a detection time of 15 minutes and a production capacity of 200,000 units per week, the government said on Monday.

The laboratory in the capital Algiers develops the test kits in partnership with Canadian and Jordanian firms, junior minister in charge of pharmaceutical production Lotfi Benbahmed said on state television, without naming the two foreign partners.

The North African country has allocated \$100 million to import medical equipment and pharmaceutical products to counter the virus. It has also received medical donations from China over the past days.

The government has imposed a nationwide curfew, ordered the closure of most businesses and suspended public transport to slow the spread of the virus. Algeria has so far reported 5,891 confirmed infections, with 507 deaths and 2,841 recoveries.



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Algerian singer Idir, a Berber icon, has died in Paris
Over 1,000 Algerian passengers stranded at Istanbul airport